

conejita



A zine by Lilly Chamblin,
with a special feature from
MCH.

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Lupercalia to St. Valentine: The History and Evolution of Valentine's Day



Valentine's Day's rich and varied history begins with the pre-Christian Roman festival of Lupercalia. The festival's traditions bear little resemblance to the love letters and chocolate boxes we associate with Valentine's Day now; however, the core foundations of the festival still align with the less commercial aspects of the holiday- fertility, sexuality, and purification.

The Romans celebrated Lupercalia in mid-February, dedicating its celebration to Faunus, the god of agriculture, and Juno, a feminine god of fertility. The festival had three main elements- fertility, purification, and the symbolism of the wolf. The celebrations and rituals of Lupercalia were undoubtedly bloody. Animals, often goats, would be sacrificed to the gods by priests and young men and then skinned. The naked young men would then run in groups through the streets of Rome, whipping any passerby. This flagellation, particularly of women, was seen as a method of increasing fertility. As strange as it sounds in the modern day, the perceived fertility of the goat, and its hide, turned the whips into an instrument of fertility, bestowing its power on those it touched. Both Plutarch, a Roman historian and philosopher, and Ovid, a Roman poet, have chronicled the events and purpose of Lupercalia in their writings. Both explain that the whippings were either meant to promote conception or cause conception. Plutarch also claims that women voluntarily participated in this ritual, although accounts vary.

Lupercalia was also a time of purification in Roman society. Sacrifice was often seen as cleansing and other sacrificial objects were made as well- most notably cakes. This purification was coupled with ancestor worship and was practiced throughout February. An important aspect of Lupercalia is its connection to the wolf. Entomologically, the term Lupercalia and the titles of participating men, Luperci, are ultimately derived from the Latin root for wolf, *lupus*. But why the wolf and not the goat or another fertility animal? Well, the origins of this symbol likely date back to the original myth of Rome's founding- the tale of the twins Romulus and Remus. The legend tells that the twins, abandoned as infants,

were cared for and nursed by a she-wolf, the lupa. Romulus and Remus were raised by this wolf and eventually founded Rome. Geographically, the cave in which the Lupercalia sacrifices were performed was believed to be the cave where Romulus and Remus were nursed and raised by the she-wolf, and the Luperci's run would begin from this cave after the sacrifices were made. The symbol of the wolf not only represents the fertility and nursing of the she-wolf, but also the strength of Romulus and Remus whom Rome was born from.



As time went on and the Christian faith spread across Europe, a new holiday developed. The origins of the Christian holiday of Valentine's Day, and where the holiday's namesake originated, was from a man called St. Valentine. St. Valentine's true history may never be known, but popular theories and legends posit that he was a Roman priest during the reign of Emperor Claudius II. The Emperor had outlawed marriage, believing that unmarried men performed better in the military and war. However, St. Valentine to marry couples secret, legitimizing the love and union of countless lovers. Valentine's actions were deemed acts of love and a symbol of devotion, but some legends say that his rebellion against the Emperor led to his execution.

Another popular legend claims that St. Valentine assisted in the escape of Christians jailed under Roman persecution and that his actions were never about romantic love specifically. However, it was said that he healed the jailor's daughter of her blindness and before being executed, sent her a note signed "from your Valentine", the possible origin of our modern-day Valentines.

After Christianization, Pope Gelasius I officially replaced Lupercalia with St. Valentine's Day, formally tying the holiday to its association with love. While Lupercalia/ St. Valentine's Day had always been celebrated in February, the actual day of February 14th became associated with the holiday and romance during the Middle Ages, possibly due to the belief that the mating season for birds began on this day.

The actual handwritten notes and gifts that we associate with Valentine's Day today were first popularised during the 18th century. People would send small notes, often paired with small gifts, to express love and affection to both established partners and secret admirers alike. Today, Valentine's Day is celebrated all over the world. This is mostly due to Christianization and colonization; however, each country still celebrates the holiday uniquely, and some have different names for the celebration. For example, in some parts of Latin America, the day is known as "Día del Amor y la Amistad", meaning Day of Love and Friendship. This holiday celebrates both romantic and platonic love. While the holiday is still celebrated on February 14th, some regions have other histories relating to a holiday of love. In Mexico, the Mexica people would fast for four days and make offerings to two divinities that represented love, Xochipilli and Xochiquetzal.

The list could go on, with several other countries and regions throughout history celebrating their festivals of love, fertility, and sexuality. However, this timeline pieces together the major historical events that led to Valentine's Day as we know it in the modern and Western world.



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Which Valentine's Jellycat Are You?

Which city are you finding love in?

- a. Paris, France
- b. Joshua Tree National Park
- c. London England
- d. NYC, New York
- e. Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- f. Los Angeles, California



You're building a v-day basket, which chocolate are you picking?

- a. swiss miss hot chocolate
- b. sea salt caramels
- c. chocolate oranges
- d. reeses
- e. matcha white chocolate
- f. spicy dark dark chocolate

Which classic rom-com are you watching?

- a. When Harry Met Sally
- b. The Princess Bride
- c. Pride and Prejudice
- d. Before Sunrise
- e. The Notebook
- f. 10 things I hate about you

Pick a heart candy

a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



f.



Where are you taking your date?

- a. a cozy, plant cafe
- b. sushi bar
- c. fancy French restaurant
- d. your favorite street food vendor
- e. flower and charcuterie bar
- f. an intimate speakeasy

Pick a statement piece for your v-day outfit.

- a. see through cape
- b. heart embroidered jeans
- c. red plaid skirt
- d. heart statement belt
- e. a big flowy dress
- f. corset blouse

Which famous painting would you hang in your house?

a.



b.



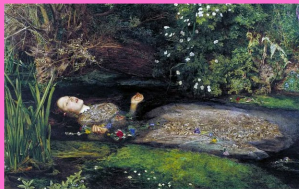
c.



d.



e.



f.





Pick a Valentine's Day cryptid.

- a. cupids
- b. the siren
- c. the bride of Frankenstein
- d. the vampire
- e. the ghost
- f. the devil

What are you hoping to get for Valentine's Day?

- a. a love letter
- b. a surprise trip
- c. box of chocolates
- d. anything at all
- e. a kiss
- f. lingerie

Which dessert are you ordering?

- a. cupcake
- b. tanghulu (candied fruit)
- c. creme brulee
- d. s'mores platter
- e. strawberry champagne cake
- f. chocolate lava cake

Pick a card.

a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



f.

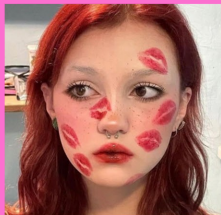


What love song are you putting on aux?

- a. Kiss of Life, Sade
- b. Kiss Me, Sixpence None the Wiser
- c. At Last, Etta James
- d. Linger, The Cranberries
- e. Love Story, Taylor Swift
- f. Leave the Door Open, Silk Sonic

Pick a Valentine's Day makeup look.

a.



b.



c.



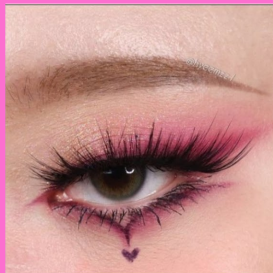
d.



e.



f.



Results!

Mostly A



Mostly B



Mostly C



Mostly D



Mostly E



Mostly F



Heart on Display: An Analysis of Love in Art

The Kiss - Gustav Klimt (1908)



Created in the midst of his “golden period,” which was characterized by his work’s similarity to Byzantine murals and the incorporation of gold leaf into his paints, *The Kiss* gives love a kind of holiness.

The bright, golden aura surrounding the lovers combined with their nearness to a precipice reminds us that we should treat love as something both fervently sacred and intensely fragile.

In Bed - Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1892)

This painting represents a close, intimate form of love found only in the tenderness of trusting and accepting another for all that they are.

Modeled by two women who work in a Parisian brothel, the work does not fetishize or exploit the lovers, but simply displays the quiet devotion and calm of a love kept safe from the judgment of the world.



Sappho and Erinna in a Garden at Mytilene - Simeon Solomon (1864)



While both were famous poets, it is debated whether Sappho and Erinna lived at the same time or even on the same island. Their love for each other, seen in the two doves and the strewn-about flowers, and their work, seen in the discarded lyre and poetry at the foot of the stature of Aphrodite, stretched beyond the centuries, connecting them in this static moment of adoration and sentiment.

Girl with a Cat - Ivan Kramskoy (1882)



This Valentine's Day, some of us have only our pets to come home to. And while we love our furry friends, sometimes one can't help but desire something more. It can be a comfort to us that humans across the centuries have shared in our loneliness and grief, like this girl here, whose thoughts seem veiled behind a melancholy yet aloof countenance, while the violence and brutality of her true feelings are reflected in the evocative red of the background.

The Awakening of Adonis -
John William Waterhouse (1899)

In greek mythology, Adonis was a beautiful young man with whom Aphrodite fell in love with. When he was killed by a wild boar, Aphrodite begged Zeus to return him to her. Zeus revived him, but decreed that Adonis would spend half the year with Aphrodite and half in the underworld. The story represents the undeniable power of love and the inevitable changing of the seasons from winter to spring.



Garden with Courting Couples - Vincent Van Gogh (1887)



The spring-like vividness in which Van Gogh paints the couples displays his own yearning for love. He depicts them in a vibrant and colorful fashion that seems to ignore the quarrels and obstacles that often accompany relationships - he conveys love as complete and utter perfection.

Measure With the Heart

Sweet, savory, and rich recipes like short ribs and brown butter gnocchi are popular on this romantic holiday. Maybe you're going to a fancy restaurant or cooking an intimate dinner at home for two, but I'm here to advocate for the latter and give you a recipe that'll make it worthwhile.

I propose to you, Stif'ado. Sick of eating the same red wine short ribs every year? Me too! Stif'ado is the solution. This aromatic and authentic beef stew gives you everything great about slow-cooked, fall-off-the-bone short ribs without the too-rich stomach ache afterward. Stif'ado is a slow-cooked Greek masterpiece, roasted with sweet shallots in an aromatic red sauce. It's the perfect dish to break bread and dip into with a loved one.

This recipe was created by @marys_kovzina on Instagram, she has an excellent video tutorial on this recipe: however, I have written out steps below as well.

Stif'ado

Prep time: 10 mins Cook time: 2 hrs, 10 mns 4-7 servings

1.5 kg	Chuck steak (cut into large cubes)
6 tbsp	Olive oil
9-15	Shallots (whole, peeled, depends on size- you want to basically cover the bottom of the pot and then stack some on top)
2 cloves	Chopped garlic
½ cup	Red wine
2 sticks	Cinnamon
6-8	Whole cloves
½ tsp	Allspice
3	Bay leaves
700 g	Tomato Passata (or purée)
	Water
	Salt and pepper
	Fresh parsley
	Baguette (or bread of choice)
	Rice (optional)

Method:

1. Place a Dutch oven or large pot over medium-high heat.
2. Add oil and brown meat in batches (it doesn't need to cook through all the way). After browning remove from pot and set aside.
3. Add another drizzle of olive oil and sauté whole shallots for approximately 2 minutes. Then add chopped garlic.
4. When the bottom of the pot starts to brown, deglaze with red wine. Add tomato passata and spices. (Note: if you don't want the cloves, bay leaves, or cinnamon loose in the sauce, use a sachet (bundle made of cheesecloth) or a heat-safe tea strainer. Be sure to leave space in the sachet at the cinnamon sticks start to unfurl.).
5. Add the meat back into the pot and add enough water to cover the top pieces.
6. Place the lid on the pot completely.
7. Turn the heat down to medium and allow to simmer for up to 2 hours, checking and stirring often (gently, as not to break the shallots).
8. The sauce is traditionally thick, but you can add water or flour/cornstarch slurry to thin or thicken to your desired consistency.
9. Serve on its own or over rice with bread, garnish with fresh parsley.
10. *Enjoy!*

Note: If you have sauce, it's great over rice by itself!



a mesage from the editor:

thank you for reading! whether you're single or taken this holiday, I hope you take the time to enjoy the love that life brings and give a little extra love to your self and those around you <3 see you in the next one!
-lilly, xoxo



